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AT THE GALLERIES / Robert McDonald

SAN DIEGO—There's as much a wealth of photographs in galleries downtown these days as there is in the outlying areas mentioned in last Friday's column. And the most interesting aren't just pretty pictures, either.

Java, the combined coffee-house-gallery (837 D St.), is exhibiting eight collaborative works by Richard Peterson and Sydney Kovac. Peterson makes the enigmatic black-and-white photographs; Kovac makes their presentations.

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The latter, which Kovac calls "juxtapositions," are elaborately carved frames, found in junk shops and painted glossy black, and mats covered in pieces of old wallpaper decorated with common images—blossoms, butterflies and birds—in somber colors.

Peterson's photographs are a mix of candid street shots and studio portraits. The subjects generally have a raw, unsettling quality, whether they be costumed Tijuana celebrants or anonymous androgynous nudes, a quality accentuated by Kovac's "juxtapositions." The deliberately malproportioned relationships of their components are so extreme that their effect is rather like that of fingernails scratching on a blackboard.

The exhibition continues through Nov. 8.

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In a continuing "pursuit of the undefinable," Richard Peterson, as organizer of exhibitions rather than exhibiting artist, is showing works by Boyd Rice at Pink and Pearl Gallery (711 8th Ave.).

Rice, who earlier at the same gallery exhibited "Found Photographs"—torn, tattered, stained and bleached—that he had discovered in the streets of 15 cities throughout the world, is now showing "Actual Photographs" that he has made through processes that he does not wish to reveal.

The artist, a San Diego native now residing in San Francisco, is a well-known musician (or "noise artist") with 10 records to his credit, including one entitled "Easy Listening for the Hard of Hearing." He also concertizes worldwide and has an appearance scheduled in Iceland.

As a writer, he has published an anthology, "Incredibly Strange Films" and other titles. A book on pranks is in the works.

Rice's black-and-white photographs at the Pink and Pearl Gallery, ranging from postage stamp to post card to small poster in size, are generally enigmas. A few, however, resemble tree limbs. Have you ever noticed how bark looks like diseased skin?

Rice, who believes that the best art frees viewers to discover meanings for themselves, eschews imposing his own interpretations on them.

The exhibition continues through Nov. 15.

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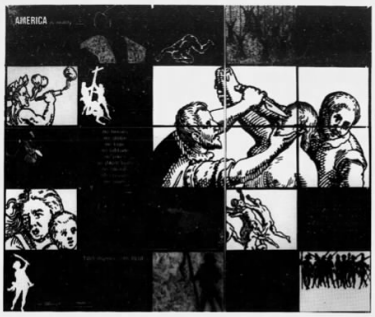
From the sublimely ridiculous to the merely ridiculous, The Gallery Store (724 Broadway) is hosting the sixth annual Photography Awards Exhibition of the Museum of Photographic Arts.



A section of the installation "1492," which depicts the discovery of the New World, by Deborah Small.

Juror this year was James Alinder, executive director of the Friends of Photography, based in Carmel.

The exhibition is very conservative, not to say retardative. See, for example, a fence across an open field, a nude couple with their nude infant, a woman with puckered lips. The banality is benumbing.

Exceptions are Michael Graves' black-and-white image of a woman sitting on a stool in a kitchen (her rectilinearity parallels that of the environment); Robert Nishihira's color image of Australian lilies against a field with small colored squares; Patrik Ryane's color abstract composition (which is a real view of an automobile), and A. Wasil's romantic color image of a semi-nude woman in water (which seems, unfortunately, to resemble the recent work of Soda House).

This disappointing exhibition continues through Nov. 15. It will travel to Southwestern College (Nov. 19-Dec. 5) and Palomar College (Jan. 5-23). Why?

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Now for a non-photography show.

Anuska Galerie (2400 Kettner Blvd.) is exhibiting new works by Deborah Small, entitled as an installation "1492."

The installation combines two series of paintings representing conflicting versions of the arrival of Europeans. A group of paintings in color documents the familiar romantic story of exploration and settlement. A group of paintings in black and white, based on engravings made by Theodore de Bry in the 16th Century, documents the mistreatment of the inhabitants during the early years of colonization.

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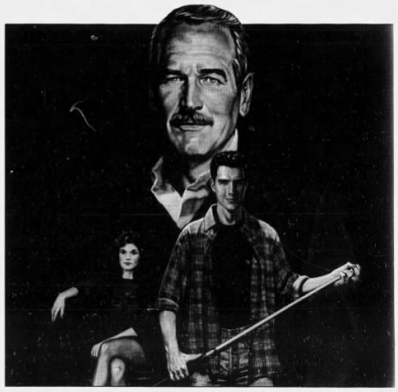

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